

VZCZCXRO4318
OO RUEHHM
DE RUEHHI #0688 1610941
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 090941Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7986
RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH 4835

UNCLAS HANOI 000688

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, DRL/AWH
NSC for NSC/Asia

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL CM VM

SUBJECT: VICE FOREIGN MINISTER ON PRIME MINISTER'S UPCOMING U.S.
VISIT

1.(SBU) Summary: The Ambassador met on Saturday, June 7 with Vice Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh, who was preparing to travel to Washington on June 9 to do advance work for Prime Minister Dung's upcoming visit. Minh shared GVN views on the "need" for the PM to be received at least at the level of then PM Phan Van Khai in 2005, the contents of a possible Joint Statement, other meetings for the PM, and timing of the formal announcement of the visit, which the Vietnamese would like to delay until on or about June 19. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Just prior to the Ambassador's departure for the United States on Saturday, June 7, he met with First VFM Pham Binh Minh to discuss the upcoming visit of Vietnamese PM Nguyen Tan Dung. The Ambassador began by noting Washington is looking forward to VFM Minh's consultations in Washington beginning on June 10 to advance the visit. The Ambassador noted that Minh's USG interlocutors will be interested in hearing, in particular, how Vietnam intends to follow up on our recent Human Rights Dialogue with progress on human rights. Release of prisoners of concern would be a most positive step by the GVN. Other positive steps could include allowing foreign news organizations to open offices in Ho Chi Minh City and agreement to move forward in specific areas of cooperation in the governance field.

¶3. (SBU) Minh began his remarks by stating that Vietnam is "disappointed" by the treatment the PM was set to receive, with only one meeting on June 24 and no other White House events. This is much less than the PM's predecessor, Phan Van Khai, received during his 2005 visit, Minh explained, adding that he has yet to "dare" inform PM Dung of the current state of his Washington schedule. The perception that PM Dung is being slighted could be avoided, Minh said, if a Cabinet Secretary could host a reception or dinner in the name of POTUS. The Secretary of Commerce hosted a reception along these lines for then-PM Khai, Minh recalled, and this was an appropriate gesture reflecting our good relations. An invitation to stay at Blair House would also be welcome, Minh said. The GVN will also insist that the PM go in "the front door" for his meeting at the White House. Minh said he understood the United States is proposing a formal announcement of the visit two weeks in advance.

¶4. (SBU) A joint statement will also constitute an important step to "equalize" treatment of then-PM Khai and PM Dung, Minh argued, adding that it would serve to highlight progress in well over a score of areas. The Ambassador responded that the decision on whether or not to seek a joint statement rests with Washington and would need to include robust language on human rights. Minh said he understood and accepted this point.

¶5. (SBU) In terms of other meetings for the PM, Minh said the GVN is proposing meetings with Secretaries of Defense, Treasury and possibly Commerce. They are also interested in meetings with leaders of the House and Senate and with the major party presidential candidates. The PM will fly to Houston, then to Austin

to meet with Governor Perry.

¶ 16. (SBU) Asked about the possibility of a roundtable for the PM with university presidents, Minh said he was not familiar with the proposal but agreed it sounded very useful and looked forward to discussing it further when he is in Washington.

¶ 17. (SBU) Given that arrangements are still in flux (and perhaps out of concern that the PM has yet to be briefed on arrangements), Minh told Ambassador Michalak that the GVN will inform Washington that it would prefer to announce the visit only five days beforehand, instead of two weeks as proposed by Washington, so more details can be finalized beforehand.

ALOISI